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Philo and the Garden of Eden: an exegete, his text and his tools

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Jutta Leonhardt-Balzer

Philo and the Garden of Eden: an Exegete, his Text and his Tools

Introduction

Philo is known as the author of the most extensive exegetical oeuvre preserved from Second Temple times, he offers unique insights into the exegesis of the LXX in the intellectual milieu in which it originated, the Hellenistic Jewish tradition of Alexandria. There is not much known about Philo's life beyond the fact that he lived in the first half of the first century CE as upper class Alexandrian Jew, whose privileged position allowed him to serve as emissary with the emperor Gaius on behalf of his community after the Alexandrian pogroms.¹ His writings, however, contain 36 treatises on allegorical commentary, interpretation of the Torah, as well as philosophical and historical books.² Most of his writings serve the interpretation of the Torah, and particularly in his allegorical commentary there are numerous biblical quotations. The form of the allegorical commentary consists of the quotation (*lemma*) which then is approached in the form of a question (*quaestio*), and finally expounded in different ways, first literally, then in different allegorical interpretations (*solutio*).³ Within this methodological framework Philo moves from the exegesis of the main text via a series of subordinate texts back to the main text before moving to the next

¹ On Philo's life in the context of Alexandria and its culture, see MIRIAM HADAS-LEBEL, *Philo of Alexandria. A Thinker in the Jewish Diaspora*, Leiden 2012.

² This division is generally accepted. For a summary, see e.g. ANNA PASSONI DELL'ACQUA, *Upon Philo's Biblical Text and the Septuagint*, in Francesca Calabi (ed.), *Italian Studies on Philo of Alexandria*, *Studies in Philo of Alexandria and Mediterranean Antiquity* 1, Leiden 2003, 25–52, esp. 29–31.

³ On Philo's allegorical commentary and its structure, see VALENTIN NIKIPROWETZKY, *L'exégèse de Philon d'Alexandrie dans le De Gigantibus et le Quod Deus*, in David Winston, John Dillon (eds), *Two Treatises of Philo of Alexandria. A Commentary on De Gigantibus and Quod Deus Sit Immutabilis*, *Brown Judaic Studies* 25, Chico, CA 1983, 5–75; JOHN DILLON, *The Formal Structure of Philo's Allegorical Exegesis*, in David Winston, John Dillon (eds), *Two Treatises of Philo of Alexandria*, 77–87; MAREN R. NIEHOFF, *Jewish Exegesis and Homeric Scholarship in Alexandria*, Cambridge 2011, 133–168.

verse. The Torah is quoted in Greek. Only rarely does he interact with Hebrew words.⁴ Thus he is an important text witness as well as interpreter.⁵

The LXX was the crucial Greek version for Philo, most of his quotations correspond to its text, not to other translations.⁶ In his opinion – as well as that of most of his Alexandrian Jewish contemporaries – this Greek translation of the Torah was not only divinely inspired and valid, it is seen as equal to the Hebrew original. Philo describes in detail how an expert group of Jewish scholars produced this miraculous translation at the order of the Ptolemaic king (*Mos.* 2.25–44).⁷ The legend he relates merely refers to the translation of the Pentateuch,⁸ it does not include that of the other

⁴ In older research it was claimed that Philo used the Hebrew text, see ROGER ARNALDEZ, *L'influence de la traduction des Septante sur le Commentaire de Philon*, in Raymond Kuntzmann, Jacques Schlosser (eds), *Études sur le judaïsme hellénistique. Congrès de Strasbourg* (1983), *LeDiv* 119, Paris 1984, 251–266, esp. 264–266. However, apart from a few key words taken from lexicographical aids, there is no clear and coherent reference to the Hebrew, occasionally Philo even rejects the Hebrew meaning (e.g. that God might regret an action, in *Immut.* 21) cf. DAVID GOODING, VALENTIN NIKIPROWETZKY, Philo's Bible in the *De Gigantibus* and *Quod Deus*, in David Winston, John Dillon (eds), *Two Treatises of Philo of Alexandria. A Commentary on De Gigantibus and Quod Deus Sit Immutabilis*, *Brown Judaic Studies* 25, Chico, CA 1983, 89–125, esp. 119–122.

⁵ Since the 16th–17th century Philo's numerous references to the Torah have been studied as quotations and interpretations of the LXX text, cf. ANTONIO POSSEVINO, *Apparatus sacer ad scriptores Veteris et Novi Testamenti*, Venice 1603–1606, *Coloniae Agrippinae* 1608 II, 281–286. For further scholarship, see ERWIN R. GOODENOUGH, HOWARD L. GOODHARDT, *General bibliography of Philo*, in Erwin R. Goodenough, *The Politics of Philo Judaeus. Practice and Theory*, New Haven, CT 1938; repr. Hildesheim 1967, 127–328, esp. 246–246; cf. also LEOPOLD COHN, ISAAK HEINEMANN, MAXIMILIAN ADLER, WILLY THEILER (eds), *Philo von Alexandrien. Die Werke in deutscher Übersetzung*, 7 Bände, Breslau, Berlin: de Gruyter, 1909–1938, 1964 (vol. 7), vol. 1; ANNA PASSONI DELL'ACQUA, *Upon Philo's Biblical Text*, 27–28.

⁶ Thus for instance the manuscripts MAHG, cf. DAVID GOODING, VALENTIN NIKIPROWETZKY, *Philo's Bible*, esp. 89.

⁷ Cf. ANNA PASSONI DELL'ACQUA, *Upon Philo's Biblical Text*, 33–35.

⁸ Philo gives evidence of the development of the legend and the importance of the translation for the Alexandrian Jews in the first century, and most studies on Philo and the LXX focus on the legend, cf. SEBASTIAN BROCK, *To Revise or not to Revise. Attitudes to Jewish Biblical Interpretation*, in George J. Brooke, Barnabas Lindars (eds), *Septuagint, Scrolls and Cognate Writings. Papers Presented to the International Symposium on the Septuagint and Its Relations to the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Writings*, Manchester 1990, *Septuagint, Scrolls and Cognate Writings* 33, Atlanta, GA 1992, 301–338, esp. 303–309; MARGUERITE HARL, GILLES DORIVAL, OLIVIER MUNNICH, *La Bible grecque des Septante. Du Judaïsme hellénistique au christianisme ancien*, Initiations au christianisme ancien, Paris 1988, 46–47; YEHOASHUA AMIR, *La letteratura giudeo-ellenistica. La versione dei LXX, Filone e Giuseppe Flavio*, in Sergio J. Sierra (ed.), *La letteratura ebraica delle scritture, La Bibbia nella storia* 18, Bologna 1996, 31–58. Yet the relevance of Philo for the LXX is not limited to the legend, cf. JUTTA LEONHARDT-

writings. This difference can also be seen in the biblical texts, which Philo chooses to interpret: The Torah represents by far the largest number, and only the Torah provides the main text, quotations of the other writings can only be found in the secondary, auxiliary texts references.⁹

The present contribution focuses on the use of text and auxiliary text in the interpretation of the garden of Eden. Thus it combines both aspects of this conference: an interest in the meaning of an LXX place and the intentions conveyed in its interpretation.

Eden as luxury – from pleasure to joy

In the Pentateuch Eden is mentioned six times,¹⁰ three times in Gen 2:8–15 as the garden planted by God, twice in the context of the expulsion of Adam from Eden in Gen 3:23–24, and in Gen 4:16, when Cain leaves for Nod, which is described as “opposite Eden”. All these passages are interpreted in Philo, some more than once.

The name Eden occurs 20 times in Philo’s writings.¹¹ Most occurrences are quotations of the biblical text, but in six of these occurrences it is found together with the term “luxury” (τρυφή). The latter term occurs 21 times in Philo.¹² Thus the usage of the two terms overlaps in a third of occurrences. This is a significant correlation in itself. A closer look at the texts enhances this relationship.

In *Leg.* 1.43 Philon quotes Gen 2:8:¹³

BALZER, Philo und die Septuaginta, in Wolfgang Kraus, Martin Karrer, Martin Meiser (eds), *Die Septuaginta – Texte, Theologien, Einflüsse: 2. Internationale Fachtagung veranstaltet von Septuaginta Deutsch (LXX.D), Wuppertal 23–27.07.08, WUNT 252, Tübingen 2010*, 623–637.

⁹ Cf. ANNA PASSONI DELL’ACQUA, *Upon Philo’s Biblical Text*, 32–33.

¹⁰ Altogether the name occurs twenty times in the Bible (Gen 2:8,10,15; 3:23,24; 4:16; 2Kings 19:12; 2Chr 29:12; 31:15; Is 37:12; 51:3; Ez 27:23; 28:13; 31:9,16,18 [2x]; 36:35; Am 1:5; Joel 2:3), cf. ABRAHAM EVEN-SHOSHAN, *A New Concordance of the Bible. Thesaurus of the Language of the Bible Hebrew and Aramaic Roots, Words, Proper Names, Phrases and Synonyms*, Jerusalem 1990.

¹¹ Ἐδὲμ *Leg.* 1.43, 45, 63, 64, 65 (2x); *Cher.* 12 (2x), 13; *Post.* 1, 32 (3x), 128; *Plant.* 32, 38; *Conf.* 61; *Somn.* 2.241, 242; cf. PEDER BORGES, KÄRE FUGLSETH, ROALD SKARSTEN, *The Philo index. A complete Greek word index to the writings of Philo of Alexandria*, Grand Rapids 2000. LEISEGANG: LXX: I 71.19 – *Leg.* 1.43; I 77.5.21; 1.63,65; I 172.25 – *Cher.* 12.

¹² Τρυφή: *Leg.* 1. 45, 96; 3.167; *Cher.* 1, 12 (2x); *Sacr.* 21; *Post.* 32; *Plant.* 38; *Ebr.* 21; *Somn.* 1.123; 2.242; *Ios.* 44, 243; *Mos.* 1.89; 2.13; *Spec.* 2.99, 240; *Praem.* 146; *Contempl.* 48; *Legat.* 168, cf. PEDER BORGES, KÄRE FUGLSETH, ROALD SKARSTEN, *The Philo index*.

¹³ Ἐδὲμ *Leg.* 1.43, 45, 63, 64, 65 (2x).

„And the Lord God planted a garden/paradise in Eden (ἐφύτευσεν κύριος ὁ θεὸς παράδεισον ἐν Εδέμ) in the East and there he placed the man, whom he had created.”¹⁴

Philo rejects the idea that God might have been interested in pleasure (ἡδονή) when doing so (44). The passage is in Philo's allegorical commentary and consequently he reads Eden symbolically. He proceeds:

“Now virtue (ἡ ἀρετή) is called a garden (παράδεισος) metaphorically (τροπικῶς), and the appropriate place for the garden is Eden (τόπος δὲ οἰκείος τῷ παραδείσῳ Ἐδέμ); and this means luxury (τρυφή); and the most appropriate field for virtue is peace, and ease, and joy (εἰρήνη καὶ εὐπάθεια καὶ χαρά); of which luxuriating really consists (τὸ τρυφᾶν ὡς ἀληθῶς ἐστι)” (45).

In this symbolic reading Philo relates the garden to virtue in general and mentions the interpretation that “Eden” means “luxury”, ‘luxuriousness’ (τρυφή) as if this was a translation of the Hebrew *יָדֵן*. Consequently, in 63–64 the rivers, which run from Eden (2:10–14), are related to the virtues, which run from the wisdom of God, and from which the wise derive pleasure (65, here the verb *τρυφάω* is used again).¹⁵

Philo's exegesis of Eden rotates around the question, why Eden, the place that God himself planted, and which to him therefore must be the garden of virtue, can be called a place of luxury and pleasure. The question poses itself, how did Philo get the idea that Eden and luxury are in any way related? The answer is straightforward: He found it in his text. In Gen 3:23–24, when Adam and Eve are sent from paradise, Eden is called “garden/ paradise of luxury”:

“And the Lord God sent him from the paradise of luxury (ἐκ τοῦ παραδείσου τῆς τρυφῆς), to work the earth, from which he came. 24 And he sent Adam and he removed him from the garden/ paradise of luxury (καὶ κατώκισεν αὐτὸν ἀπέναντι τοῦ παραδείσου τῆς τρυφῆς) and arranged the Cherubim and the flaming sword which rotates, to watch over the path to the tree of life.”

Thus the LXX itself links the place Eden with the idea of a pleasure garden. The term paradise developed from there. The biblical text envisages a comfortable place of enjoyment as opposed to the hard life Adam has to lead when he is expelled from there.

Philo is very aware of this passage, he quotes it a few passages later in *Leg.* 1.96 relating to the question of God's authority to expel Adam from paradise. He also quotes Gen 3:23–24 in *Cher.* 1 in the context of a discussion of the difference between being cast out and sent out. The problem of Eden as a place of luxury is then taken up in *Cher* 12, Philo expounds on

¹⁴ All Greek LXX Quotations are from JOHN W. WEVERS, *Septuaginta. Vetus Testamentum Graecum*, vol. I: Genesis, Göttingen 1974. The Greek translations of the LXX and Philo are my own.

¹⁵ The same passage of the four rivers is interpreted in *Post.* 128.

Eden as luxury, but more in the sense of delight. Philo interprets Gen 4:16, Cain's leaving the presence of God for the land of Nod, which is opposite of Eden.¹⁶

"Now Nod being interpreted means commotion, and Eden means luxury (ἐρμηνεύεται δὲ Ναὶδ μὲν σάλος, Ἐδέμ δὲ τρυφή). The one therefore is a symbol of wickedness agitating the soul (κακίας κλονούσης ψυχὴν σύμβολον), and the other of virtue which creates for the soul a state of enjoyment and luxury (ἀρετῆς εὐπάθειαν αὐτῇ περιποιούσης καὶ τρυφήν), not the debauchery by mindless passions (οὐχὶ τὴν δι' ἀλόγου πάθους ἡδονῆς θρύψιν), but a painless and indifferent joy (ἄπονον χαρὰν καὶ ἀταλαίπωρον) through much ease (μετὰ πολλῆς εὐμαρείας)."

In Cher 13 this is summarised as "the joy, which is synonymous with Eden" (χαρὰ συνώνυμος Ἐδέμ).

As before, Philo steers the meaning of Eden from "luxury", τρυφή, towards "joy", χαρά. Again, although his text does not require it, Philo links Eden with τρυφή. The same contrast between Nod and Eden is created in the interpretation of Gen 4:16 in *Post.* 32:

"For [Moses] says that 'Nod', which means the tumult into which the soul has migrated (τὸν κλόνον, εἰς ὃν ἡ ψυχὴ μετῴκησεν), is 'opposite to Eden'. Now Eden is a symbolical expression for correct and divine reason (συμβολικῶς δὲ ἐστὶν Ἐδέμ ὁρθὸς καὶ θεῖος λόγος), on which account its interpretation is 'luxury' (παρὰ καὶ ἐρμηνείαν ἔχει 'τρυφήν'); because [the divine reason], above all other things, exults in and is delighted with (ἐνευφραίνεται καὶ ἐντρυφᾷ) the unmingled and pure, and is also experienced with the perfect and complete good things, because God, the giver of all good things, rains down his virginal and undying grace (τὰς παρθένους καὶ ἀθανάτους χάριτας αὐτοῦ). And by its own nature, the bad always strives with the good (φύσει δὲ μάχεται ἀγαθῷ κακόν), the unjust with the just (ἄδικον δικαίῳ), the sensible with the foolish (φρόνιμον ἄφρονι), and everything to do with virtue with all the different species of wickedness (πάνθ' ὅσα ἀρετῆς πρὸς τὰ κακίας εἶδη). Something like this is the meaning that 'Nod is opposite to Eden'."

Here as well, immediately, like a reflex, Philo links "Eden" with τρυφή. Philo's problem is that τρυφή is generally associated with pleasure and debauchery, not with virtue. Thus it is found in *Sacr.* 21 in the attributes of pleasure contrasted to those of virtue. Likewise in *Ebr.* 21 it is one of a list of attributes associated with the desire for the opposite of virtue. In *Spec.* 2.240 a life of "luxury" is paralleled to arrogance. In *Somn.* 1.123 Philo lists the "luxury of women" as expression of effeminate behaviour and vice, in the same way in *Praem.* 146 the term is used to describe the soft and effeminate life of women. In *Ios.* 44 the meaning is "licentiousness" in the context of adultery and debauchery, in *Ios.* 243 in a more neutral sense of "luxury" as excess of necessary things. In *Mos.* 1.89 the term describes a life of luxury, similarly in *Spec.* 2.99. More specifically, it relates to a

¹⁶ Gen 3:23 is also quoted in *Post.* 1 with a discussion of the biblical expression of the "face of God".

gentile life of luxury in *Mos.* 2.13, and the Italian life of luxury in *Contempl.* 48. In *Legat.* 168 it relates to the life of excess, which Gaius entered after Tiberius died.

Now it is this term with its rather negative associations, which the LXX text of Gen 2–4 uses to describe the positive place described as Eden, and all these negative connotations present the background against which Philo deals with the biblical text. What Philo needs is a positive counter-context. This he finds in the idea of the virtuous rejoicing in God. How does he get there? The missing link can be found in *Plant.* 32–36:

Gen 2:8 is once more quoted in *Plant.* 32. Again, Philo first discusses the idea of God's planting things. In *Plant.* 37–38 he returns to the name Eden and interprets it, once again, as “luxury”:

“(37) Now these cannot have been physical trees, but must necessarily have been plants of a rational soul (λογικῆς δὲ ψυχῆς ἀναγκαίως φυτά), on the one hand the same path the goal of which has life and immortality; and on the other the flight towards wickedness and death of those, which therefore is taken away by the bountiful God from the soul as in the garden of virtues (οὗν φιλόδωρον θεὸν ὑποληπτέον ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ καθάπερ παράδεισον ἀρετῶν) and he implants the acts according to [the virtues] leading towards complete happiness (καὶ τῶν κατ’ αὐτὰς πράξεων ἐμφυτεύειν πρὸς τελείαν εὐδαιμονίαν αὐτὴν ἄγοντα). (38) Therefore, also, he has attributed a most appropriate place to the paradise (τόπον οἰκειότατον προσένειμε τῷ παραδείσῳ), called Eden but meaning luxury (καλούμενον Ἐδέμ ἐρμηνεύεται δὲ τρυφή), a symbol of the soul, which sees the complete things (σύμβολον ψυχῆς τῆς ἄρτια βλεπούσης), and revels amid the virtues, and exults on account of the abundance and magnitude of its joy (ὑπὸ πλῆθους καὶ μεγέθους χαρᾶς ἀνασκιρτώσης); proposing, instead of the thousand things regarded as pleasant among men, the enjoyment in the service of the Only Wise One (τὴν τοῦ μόνου θεραπείαν σοφοῦ).”

As in the previous cases, the end result is clear: The “place” (τόπος) of Eden, for Philo, is the virtuous “soul” (ψυχή) enjoying the “service” or “worship” (θεραπεία) of God. To deal with the problem that the term τρυφή is associated with luxury Philo cannot resort to any Torah text, because such a text does not exist in the Torah. Instead he finds a solution in the LXX Ps 36.4 (37.4), quoted in *Plant.* 39 and *Somn.* 2.242, which is “delight [or rather: luxuriate] in the Lord!” (κατατρύφησον τοῦ κυρίου). In *Plant.* 39 Philo introduces the psalms as utterance of a fellow associate (θιασώτης) of Moses and quotes the phrase *verbatim* to illustrate the joy of the people who worship the true God. As we have seen, the context (38) is the explanation of Eden, translated as “luxury” (τρυφή). By combining the problematic interpretation of Eden with the Psalm verse Philo can interpret Eden as the place of the soul “proposing the veneration of the Only Wise” (προτεθειμένης τὴν τοῦ μόνου θεραπείαν σοφοῦ, 38) in order to conclude that this worship brings about a great joy, which is neither effeminate nor devoted to luxury and therefore avoids the negative connotations of the term τρυφή. Philo introduces the psalm quotation to confirm that the only true

luxuriousness, the only cause of true joy, is to worship God. Material luxury and effeminate pampering does not have anything to do with paradise.

In this spiritual sense Gen 2:8 is also quoted in *Conf.* 61 as example of the striving for virtue opposed to that towards vice:

“61: A paradigm (παράδειγμα) of the former is this: ‘And God planted a garden/paradise in Eden towards the East.’ not of terrestrial plants but of heavenly virtues (οὐρανίων ἀρετῶν), which the planter caused to spring up from the incorporeal light which exists around him, in such a way as to be inextinguishable.”

Again, Philo needs to read the association of Eden with *τρυφή* against its more standard meaning. For this reading he needs scriptural proof. In the same way as in *Plant.* 32 Philo combines Gen 2:8–10 with LXX Ps 36:4 in *Somn.* 2.240ff. In 240 Philo distinguishes two kinds of speech, one doing good and the other doing harm. As example of this, this time he quotes Gen 2:10 (*Somn.* 2.241), which describes the river running from Eden with its four branches, again giving the same interpretation of “Eden” in 242:

“But he calls the wisdom of the true being ‘Eden’ (καλεῖ δὲ τὴν μὲν τοῦ ὄντος σοφίαν Ἐδέμ), of which the meaning is ‘luxury’ (ἧς ἐρμηνεία τρυφή), because, I think, the wisdom of God is a luxury and God is a luxury of wisdom (ἐντρύφημα καὶ θεοῦ σοφία καὶ σοφίας θεός), as it is also said in the Psalms: ‘Luxuriate (delight) in the Lord’ (κατατρύφησον τοῦ κυρίου). But the divine Logos (ὁ θεῖος λόγος) runs forth from the spring of wisdom (ἀπὸ πηγῆς τῆς σοφίας) in the way of a river, in order to fertilise and irrigate the celestial and heavenly shoots and plants of virtue-loving souls (φιλαρέτων ψυχῶν), as if they were a paradise (ὡσανεὶ παράδεισον).”

As in *Plant.* 39, the context of the Psalm quotation (LXX Ps. 36.4 (37.4)) is the name of Eden (*τρυφή*), and again, the quotation of the psalm is used to describe the joy in God and in His wisdom and to avoid any idea of luxury and excess. This means that Philo is not arbitrary in his use of Psalm quotations. He has a clear idea which psalm verse can serve to explain which exegetical points in the Pentateuch, and he quotes them consistently. The question poses itself, whether it was Philo who created the link between exegetical problem and psalm quotation or whether he found it in prearranged material.¹⁷ Note that Josephus never refers to *τρυφή* in his account of the paradise narrative.¹⁸ One way of answering this question is to look at the biblical text he quotes.

¹⁷ On Philo’s general dependence on sources (yet not in his psalm quotations), see already WILHELM BOUSSET, *Jüdisch-Christlicher Schulbetrieb in Alexandria und Rom*, Göttingen 1915. On the use of the psalms, see JUTTA LEONHARDT, *Jewish Worship in Philo of Alexandria*, TSAJ 84, Tübingen 2001, 153–154.

¹⁸ TLG search <http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/inst/textsearch>, accessed on 6/11/2014.

Philo's text

A comparison of Philo's quotations of Gen 2:8 with the text we have in the standard LXX edition, and which corresponds to the Hebrew, shows that, when quoting Gen 2:8, Philo consistently drops the κύριος from the divine name, κύριος ὁ θεός, which in the LXX is used to translate יהוה יי.י.

Gen 2:8: Καὶ ἐφύτευσεν κύριος ὁ θεὸς παράδεισον ἐν Ἑδεμ κατὰ ἀνατολὰς καὶ ἔθετο ἐκεῖ τὸν ἄνθρωπον, ὃν ἔπλασεν.

Leg. 1.43: καὶ ἐφύτευσεν ὁ θεὸς παράδεισον ἐν Ἑδεμ κατὰ ἀνατολὰς· καὶ ἔθετο ἐκεῖ τὸν ἄνθρωπον ὃν ἔπλασε.

Plant. 32: λέγεται γάρ· “ἐφύτευσεν ὁ θεὸς παράδεισον ἐν Ἑδεμ κατὰ ἀνατολὰς, καὶ ἔθετο ἐκεῖ τὸν ἄνθρωπον ὃν ἔπλασεν.”

Conf. 61: καὶ ἐφύτευσεν ὁ θεὸς παράδεισον ἐν Ἑδεμ κατὰ ἀνατολὰς.

The Göttingen LXX edition of this verse, lists as the basis of the reading κύριος ὁ θεός POxy 1007 (London, British Museum) from the late 3rd century CE, as well as various other manuscript groups,¹⁹ but the omission of κύριος is also backed up by numerous manuscripts, the earliest witness of which is from the 4th–5th century CE,²⁰ as well as by Philo, as seen above, various Church fathers,²¹ and the Latin,²² Arabic and Armenian translations. The main textual attestation of this variant is later than Philo, but nevertheless early enough to indicate a strong line of tradition, which may or may not be related to Philo's reading.

Apart from the change in the divine name there are no changes to the verse in Philo's quotations.²³ This one change, however, occurs consistently in every quotation.

Two minor stylistic changes can be found in the context of other texts on Eden, thus in Gen 2:10:

Gen 2:10: ποταμὸς δὲ ἐκπορεύεται ἐξ Ἑδεμ ποτίζειν τὸν παράδεισον, ἐκεῖθεν ἀφορίζεται εἰς τέσσαρας ἀρχάς.

¹⁹ JOHN W. WEVERS, LXX: Genesis, 84.

²⁰ JOHN W. WEVERS, LXX: Genesis, 84: O-recension: G (Leiden 4th–5th cent.), later minuscules: 15 17 29 58 72 82 125 376 400 426 707; 18 79(1⁰) 550 551 569(1⁰) *df*⁵⁶ 75t 121 424' 31' 319 539.

²¹ John Chrysostom V 129 VII 103 (twice); Hippolytus II 127; Origen, *Selecta ad Genesim* 97; Procopius Gazaeus, *Comm. in Genesim* (PG 87) 157; Severianus Gabalitanus (PG 56) 477; Theodoretus Cyrensis I 121; Wevers, LXX, 84.

²² Except for Augustine, *Doctr.* III 52; Hieronymus, *Quaest.* IV 30; Vulgate.

²³ For a list of Philo's aberrant quotations, cf. PETER KATZ, *Philo's Bible. The aberrant text of Bible quotations in some Philonic writings and its place in the textual history of the Greek Bible*, Cambridge 1950.

Somn. 2.242: “ποταμός” γάρ φησι “πορεύεται ἐξ Ἑδέμ ποτίζειν τὸν παράδεισον· ἐκεῖθεν ἀφορίζεται εἰς τέσσαρας ἀρχάς”.

Here the ἐκπορεύεται ἐξ Ἑδέμ is simplified to πορεύεται ἐξ Ἑδέμ. There is no difference in meaning attached to this change.

Another very minor difference can be found in the quotation of Gen 3:23–24 in *Leg.* 1.96:

Gen 3:23: καὶ ἐξαπέστειλεν αὐτὸν κύριος ὁ θεὸς ἐκ τοῦ παραδείσου τῆς τρυφῆς ἐργάζεσθαι τὴν γῆν, ἐξ ἧς ἐλήμφθη.

Leg. 1.96: λέγει γάρ: “καὶ ἐξαπέστειλεν αὐτὸν κύριος ὁ θεὸς ἐκ τοῦ παραδείσου τῆς τρυφῆς, ἐργάζεσθαι τὴν γῆν, ἐξ ἧς ἐλήμφθη.”

The only difference is the form of the Aorist of λαμβάνω, once with a ‘μ’, once without, with Philo reflecting the older, pre-Hellenistic, verb form,²⁴ appropriate to his style of Greek, but possibly even the earlier reading.

Apart from these few instances Philo is very conservative in his quotations. In the quotation of Gen 4:16 in *Cher.* 12 the text is taken over completely unchanged:

Gen 4:16: ἐξῆλθεν δὲ Καὶν ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ὤκησεν ἐν γῇ Ναιδ κατέναντι Ἑδέμ.

Cher. 12: τὸ ἐπὶ τοῦ Κάιν εἰρημένον, ὅτι “ἐξῆλθεν ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ὤκησεν ἐν γῇ Ναιδ κατέναντι Ἑδέμ”.

Thus in all the quotations of the verses relating to Eden there is only one relevant variant from the LXX text: The dropping of κύριος from the divine name in Gen 2:8.

There are four explanations for variants in Philo’s LXX quotations in general, which could apply to Gen 2:8:

1. Variants due to lack of interest in literal quotation²⁵

In view of the trouble Philo takes with explaining the problematic link with τρυφή, which he could just as easily have ignored as did Josephus, any lack of interest in the literal text is unlikely. Furthermore, the omission of κύριος only occurs in the context of the quotation of Gen 2:8, but it occurs in every quotation of Gen 2:8 and is therefore not accidental.

²⁴ HENRY GEORGE LIDDELL, ROBERT SCOTT, HENRY STUART JONES, RODERICK MCKENZIE, *A Greek English Lexicon*, Oxford⁹1925, *ad loc.*

²⁵ Cf. the theory that some deviations in the text derive from an interest in the rhythm of the language as in the Exagoge of Ezekiel Tragicus in NAOMI G. COHEN, *Philo’s Scriptures. Citations from the Prophets and Writings. Evidence for a Haftarah Cycle in Second Temple Judaism*, JSJ.Suppl 123, Leiden 2007, 29–33; ANNA PASSONIDELL’ACQUA, *Upon Philo’s Biblical Text*, 47.

2. *Variants due to mistakes in the textual traditions in Philo's writings*²⁶

The consistent attestation of the variant reading of Gen 2:8 in not just one but several different of Philo's allegorical writings, speaks against this explanation of the variant reading.

3. *Variants due to Philo's language and doctrine*²⁷

This theological reason could be the case in Gen 2:8: In his writings Philo relates the terms *κύριος* and *θεός* to two different aspects of the deity:²⁸ The creator of the universe is also its king.²⁹ Philo distinguishes between the merciful and creative (*ποιητική δύναμις*) and the royal power (*δύναμις βασιλική*, *Abr.* 121) of God.³⁰ In *Somn.* 1.163 the gracious aspect of God is expressed in the term *θεός*, whom only the truly wise worship. By contrast, the term *κύριος* refers to the God as the stern, punitive judge. Both concepts are used in the praise of God as king in many Jewish prayers.³¹ This distinction of the two is similar to the rabbinic distinction of God's powers (*middot*) as "Eigenschaft des Wohltuns (*hatov*) und der des Strafens (*hapur'anut*)". In the rabbinic tradition, however, there is the opposite use of the terms: the term *κύριος* reflects the merciful God, corresponding to the LXX translation of the divine name, and *θεός* refers to God as judge.³²

²⁶ Vgl. die Zusammenfassung von Ryle bei ANNA PASSONI DELL'ACQUA, *Upon Philo's Biblical Text*, 37.

²⁷ Vgl. PETER KATZ, *Philo's Bible*, 9; ANNA PASSONI DELL'ACQUA, *Upon Philo's Biblical Text*, 45–47.

²⁸ The following overview is based on JUTTA LEONHARDT, *Jewish Worship*, 106–107.

²⁹ On the various terms (above all *ἡγεμών* and *βασιλεύς*) and Philo's description of God's kingship as definition of His relationship with the world cf. GÜNTER MAYER, *Die herrscherliche Titulatur Gottes bei Philo von Alexandrien*, in Dietrich-Alex Koch and Hermann Lichtenberger (eds), *Begegnungen zwischen Christentum und Judentum in Antike und Mittelalter: Festschrift für Heinz Schreckenberg*, Göttingen 1993, 293–302, esp. 294–301.

³⁰ Cf. HARRY AUSTRYN WOLFSON, *Philo. Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, 2 vols, Cambridge, MA, 1947, vol. 2, 136; NAOTO UMEMOTO, *Die Königsherrschaft Gottes bei Philon*, in Martin Hengel and Anna-Maria Schwemer (eds), *Königsherrschaft Gottes und himmlischer Kult im Judentum, Urchristentum und der hellenistischen Welt*, WUNT 55, Tübingen 1991, 207–256.

³¹ See EPHRAIM E. URBACH, *The Sages: their Concepts and Beliefs*, transl. from Hebrew by I. Abrahams, Jerusalem 1979, 32–96; THOMAS LEHNARDT, *Der Gott der Welt ist unser König. Zur Vorstellung von der Königsherrschaft Gottes im Shema und seinen Benediktionen*, in Martin Hengel and Anna-Maria Schwemer (eds), *Königsherrschaft Gottes und himmlischer Kult*, 285–307.

³² YEHOASHUA AMIR, *Die hellenistische Gestalt des Judentums bei Philon von Alexandrien*, Neukirchen-Vluyn 1983, 171.

The inverted reading in the rabbinic tradition does not mean that Philo's reading is an innovation. It has been called an "old Haggadah",³³ and already in Hos 2:21–23 the two forms of God's relationship to man are described as judgment and mercy.³⁴ Yet the immediate background of this tradition seems to lie in Graeco-Roman culture. In Greek royal ideology the kings, just like the gods, were expected to be just judges as well as gracious benefactors.³⁵ It seems more likely that the link between royal ideology and the divine powers was at the root of this tradition,³⁶ especially as the term *κύριος* became central for the imperial cult in the Eastern part of the Roman empire and was also used as a name for many other deities;³⁷ in this context it is natural to associate *κύριος* with the punitive power.³⁸ We find the same distinction of the creator and the ruler aspect of God already in *Aristeas* 16 using *ζωοποιούνται* and *κυριεύειν*,³⁹ thus this concept predates Philo.

This distinction of "powers" could be the reason why the "*κύριος*" was dropped in the text of Gen 2:8. In the context of the creation narrative it created a conflict of the powers: the *κύριος* does not create, the creator is *κύριος*. As for the question of the origin of this reading: the influence of

³³ On the idea of a "common tradition" for the rabbinic idea of the *middot* and Philo's *dynameis*, see HENRY AUSTRYN WOLFSON, Philo, 1.225–226. This and the different language, would explain the variants in terminology of basically the same idea in Philo's and in rabbinic writings. In 2.134–135 Wolfson derives the term *dynameis* in Philo from Plato's "causative aspect of the ideas" and Aristotle's "source of movement".

The details of the connection between Philo and the rabbinic idea are disputed, but most scholars agree that Philo could represent an "old Haggadah": cf. ARTHUR MARMORSTEIN, *The Old Rabbinic Doctrine of God. I The Names and Attributes of God*, London 1927; *ibid.*, Philo and the Names of God, JQR 22 (1931–32), 295–306; NILS A. DAHL and ALAN F. SEGAL, Philo and the Rabbis on the Names of God, JSJ 9 (1978), 1–28; a summary of the positions is given by NAOMI G. COHEN, Philo Judaeus. His Universe of Discourse, Frankfurt am Main 1995, 298–299.

³⁴ NAOTO UMEMOTO, *Die Königsherrschaft*, 234.

³⁵ Cf. ERWIN R. GOODENOUGH, *The Political Philosophy of Hellenistic Kingship*, YCS 1 (1928), 55–102, esp. 68, 71–73, 77 f, 98, mainly referring to Diotogenes; ERWIN R. GOODENOUGH, *The Politics of Philo Judaeus. Practice and Theory with a General Bibliography of Philo*, bibliography by Erwin R. Goodenough and Howard L. Goodhart, New Haven 1938, 90 f, 95 f, 119; GLENN F. CHESNUT, *The Ruler and the Logos in Neopythagorean, Middle Platonic and Late Stoic Political Philosophy*, ANRW 16.2, Berlin 1978, 1310–1332.

³⁶ Cf. EPHRAIM E. URBACH, *The Sages*, 87.

³⁷ WOLF WILHELM GRAF BAUDISSLIN, *Kyrios als Gottesname im Judentum und seine Stelle in der Religionsgeschichte*, ed. by Otto Eissfeldt, 3 vols, Giessen 1929, 2.91–96.

³⁸ WOLF WILHELM GRAF BAUDISSLIN, *Kyrios*, 3.707, derives Philo's distinction from translation of the Tetragram. However, in light of the above-mentioned parallels to Hellenistic royal ideology, it is more likely that Philo reflects the Greek culture of his time, not the ancient Semitic use.

³⁹ See Barbara Schmitz' contribution in this volume.

Hellenistic royal ideology plus the evidence of Aristeas and Philo seem to link the variant to Alexandria.

Concerning the question who changed the text, light may be shed by the observation that Philo quotes the phrase *κύριος ὁ θεός* without any change of text in 54 cases throughout his writings, thus demonstrating no objection to the phrase itself.⁴⁰ It is still possible, but unlikely that Philo himself, for theological reasons, is the cause of the consistent omission of *κύριος* exclusively in the context of Eden. Yet, as the theological concept of the divine powers precedes Philo it is at least possible that the *κύριος* was not dropped by him. This leaves the final explanation:

4. *Variants due to a deviant base text.*

For all the reasons argued so far this seems the most likely explanation of the variant in Gen 2:8 and most likely also in 2:10. It would mean that this variant reading, if not original, is at least very old.

Philo's tools

Thus we find some biblical passages which show a very specific and very limited deviation from the standard LXX text while most others follow it. In the passages on Eden from the allegorical commentary Philo does not change the wording of the LXX text he quotes, even if it poses stylistic, semantic and philosophical problems, as in the case of the expression “paradise of luxury” in Gen 3:23–24. Instead a Psalm quotation is added to prove that the meaning needed to counter to the one which is normally attributed to the phrase has a scriptural basis (always remembering that the Pentateuch is the primary text).

A similar use of psalm quotations can be found in his treatment of Gen 6:1–4 and Ps 77:49 in *Gig.* 16–18. The Alexandrian LXX version Philo uses translates the Hebrew term *בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים*, “sons of God” as *ἄγγελοι τοῦ θεοῦ*, “angels of God” against the other LXX attestations, which read *υἱοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ*. In the watcher traditions (1En 5–15; Jub 5; 10) these fallen angels are developed into a long narrative as cause of the flood and characterised as evil. In Philo's time this characterisation was common knowledge. Yet there is only one passage in the whole of the Hebrew bible where the expression “angels of evil” or “angels of evil ones” *מַלְאָכֵי רָעִים* occurs, Ps 78:49, which in the LXX (LXX Ps 77:49) is translated as “evil angels” *ἄγγελοι πονηροί*:

⁴⁰ TLG search <http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/inst/textsearch>, accessed on 6.11.2014.

“He sent to them the wrath of his anger, anger and wrath and affliction (ὀργήν θυμοῦ αὐτοῦ, θυμὸν καὶ ὀργήν καὶ θλίψιν), sent by evil angels” (δι’ ἀγγέλων πονερῶν).

In this context Philo uses the Psalm to prove that in the bible there are such things as evil angels. Yet the proof of the concept of evil angels is not an exegetical aim for Philo. Instead in *Gig.* 16–18 he develops the Greek philosophical concept of the *daimones* as the souls of people, some of which never enter matter, some of which learn to ascend by virtue of philosophy and some of which – the evil angels of his tradition – never ascend.⁴¹ He even points out that in truth, for the rational person there cannot be any “evil angels”, therefore contradicting the previous Psalm argument. Thus, in Philo’s exegesis of Gen 6:1–4 we have another use of:

1. The combination of a difficulty with a Genesis phrase solved using a link to the Psalms.

2. The Psalm parallel does not solve Philo’s problem itself, it opens a new option. It provides a scriptural background for the problematic reading. Only Philo’s subsequent interpretation solves the problem. The psalms serves as a bridge between the primary text and Philo’s allegorical reading. To the Scriptural proof Philo then adds his own philosophical interpretation of the text.

3. In both cases, the interpretation of Eden and that of the evil angels, there is a textual variant, attested in the Alexandrian textual tradition.

Conclusion

Philo only very rarely quotes non-Pentateuchal texts, the psalms more than any other non-Pentateuchal book.⁴² The psalms are regarded as prophetic prayers by people well versed in the philosophy of Moses, and therefore the psalms provide legitimate exegetical aids to the Torah.⁴³ The same psalm quotations are applied consistently throughout his writings to solve the same problems.⁴⁴ Admittedly the number of passages we have for this phenomenon is too small to be certain, but in the instances studied in this contribution the main text was taken from a textual section of limited, manageable size, Gen 1–6. In both cases there is a textual variant in the

⁴¹ For a more detailed interpretation of *Gig.* 16–18, see JUTTA LEONHARDT-BALZER, “Philon”, in Florian Wilk, Martin Meiser, *Handbuch zur LXX.D*, vol. 5: *Wirkungsgeschichte*, forthcoming.

⁴² Eighteen times according to Leisegang’s index, HANS LEISEGANG, *Indices ad Philonis Alexandrini opera*, Philonis Alexandrini quae supersunt, volume 7, Berlin 1930, repr. 1962. Cf. also NAOMI G. COHEN, *Philo’s Scriptures*.

⁴³ Cf. JUTTA LEONHARDT, *Jewish Worship*, 141–156. JUTTA LEONHARDT-BALZER, *Philo und die Septuaginta*, 623–637.

⁴⁴ Cf. JUTTA LEONHARDT, *Jewish Worship*, 144–156.

quotation of the Genesis text, there exists a key-word relationship between the different Genesis and Psalm texts, the psalm quotation serves an auxiliary function, which in *Gig.* 16–18 even contradicts Philo's ultimate interpretation but serves to build a bridge between the text phrase and the interpretation by providing a background in Scripture to a singular Pentateuch phrase. Add to this the mechanical and consistent, reflex-like repetition of the link between Eden and *τρύφή* in every reference to Eden without any direct text-based need. All these observations cumulatively point towards one conclusion: They indicate that Philo is working with an Alexandrian exegetical source, a list of biblical passages from Gen 1–6 with parallels mainly from the Psalms, structured by key-words, a kind of concordance or glossary. This collection may have looked like a florilegium, quoting the first Genesis text on Eden and then all the other relevant texts.

This source seems to be further evidence of an Alexandrian speciality: the semantic study of a specific text using lexicographical aids to provide starting points for allegorical exegesis.⁴⁵ Admittedly the evidence is circumstantial, but if this theory is correct, then the study of Eden in Philo has not only offered insights about Eden as a concept, the garden of paradise, or the soul as the place of virtue. It also offers information about a different place and time: Jewish exegetical intention, their methods and tools for dealing with the LXX in first century Alexandria.

⁴⁵ Cf. MAREN R. NIEHOFF, *Jewish Exegesis*.